

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of producing a ceramic porous body having partition walls ~~having pores and a porosity of at least 40%, said pores being formed mainly by virtue of a porous silica powder or a porous silica-containing compound~~, the ceramic porous body comprising at least Si as a chemical component, the method comprising: the ceramic porous body being obtained by
_____ adding the a porous silica powder or the a porous silica-containing compound powder to a forming raw material to prepare a clay,
_____ forming the resulting ceramic clay into a specific shape, and
_____ firing the formed product,
_____ wherein the partition walls have pores and a porosity of at least 40%, said pores being formed mainly by virtue of the porous silica powder or the porous silica-containing compound.
2. (Currently Amended) The method ~~ceramic porous body~~ according to claim 1, wherein the porous silica powder or the porous silica-containing compound powder has been melted during the firing and reacted with other components of the forming raw material to form a silica-containing compound.
3. (Currently Amended) The method ~~ceramic porous body~~ according to claim 2, wherein the silica-containing compound formed by the reaction is a compound of a cordierite composition.
4. (Currently Amended) The method ~~ceramic porous body~~ according to claim 1, wherein the porous silica powder or the porous silica-containing compound powder is an amorphous silica powder or an amorphous silica-containing compound powder.

5. (Currently Amended) The method ~~ceramic porous body~~ according to claim 1, wherein the porous silica powder or the porous silica-containing compound powder has a bulk density of 1 g/cm³ or less.

6. (Currently Amended) The method ~~ceramic porous body~~ according to claim 1, wherein the porous silica powder or the porous silica-containing compound powder has a bulk density of 0.2 to 1 g/cm³.

7. (Currently Amended) The method ~~ceramic porous body~~ according to claim 1, wherein the porous silica powder or the porous silica-containing compound powder is added in an amount of 40 vol% or less of the total amount of the forming raw material after adding the powder.

8. (Currently Amended) The method ~~ceramic porous body~~ according to claim 1, wherein the ceramic porous body has a honeycomb shape.

9. (Currently Amended) A method of producing a ceramic porous body comprising at least Si as a chemical component, the ~~ceramic porous body being obtained by method comprising:~~

_____ adding silica gel granules with a 50% particle size (D₅₀) of 10 to 100 μm to a forming raw material to prepare a clay,

_____ forming the resulting ceramic clay into a specific shape, and

_____ firing the formed product.

10. (Currently Amended) The method ~~ceramic porous body~~ according to claim 9, wherein the silica gel granules have a particle size distribution defined by the following expressions (1) and (2) with respect to the 50% particle size (D₅₀):

$$0.1 \leq D_{10}/D_{50} \leq 0.5 \quad (1)$$

$$2 \leq D_{90}/D_{50} \leq 5 \quad (2)$$

where, D₅₀: 50% particle size, D₁₀: 10% particle size, and D₉₀: 90% particle size.

11. (Currently Amended) The method ~~ceramic porous body~~ according to claim 9, wherein the silica gel granules include particles with an aspect ratio of 5 or less in an amount of 90 mass% or more.

12. (Currently Amended) The method ~~ceramic porous body~~ according to claim 9, wherein the silica gel granules do not substantially include particles with a particle size exceeding 100 μm .

13. (Currently Amended) The method ~~ceramic porous body~~ according to claim 9, wherein the silica gel granules are formed of a porous body with a pore volume of 0.4 to 2.0 ml/g.

14. (Currently Amended) The method ~~ceramic porous body~~ according to claim 9, wherein the silica gel granules are particles with a specific surface area (JIS R1626) of 100 to 1000 m^2/g .

15. (Currently Amended) The method ~~ceramic porous body~~ according to claim 9, wherein Si accounts for 95 to 99.99 mol% of the total metal elements of the silica gel.

16. (Currently Amended) The method ~~ceramic porous body~~ according to claim 9, wherein the silica gel granules are obtained by sieving silica gel raw material granules with a 50% particle size (D_{50}) of 10 to 150 μm through a screen with a pore diameter of 44 to 210 μm to control the 50% particle size (D_{50}) within a range of 10 to 100 μm .

17. (Currently Amended) The method ~~ceramic porous body~~ according to claim 16, wherein granules having a particle size distribution defined by the following expressions (3) and (4) with respect to the 50% particle size (D_{50}) are used as the silica gel raw material granules:

$$0.05 \leq d_{10}/d_{50} \leq 0.5 \quad (3)$$

$$2 \leq d_{90}/d_{50} \leq 8 \quad (4)$$

where, D_{50} : 50% particle size, D_{10} : 10% particle size, and D_{90} : 90% particle size.

18. (Currently Amended) The method ~~ceramic porous body~~ according to claim 16, wherein the silica gel granules are sieved using an air jet sieving method.

19. (Original) A method of producing a formed product which produces a ceramic porous body upon firing, the method comprising adding silica gel granules or silica gel granules and water-absorbing polymer particles to a forming raw material to prepare a clay, and integrally forming the resulting ceramic clay into a formed product.

20. (Original) A method of producing a formed product which produces a ceramic porous body upon firing, the method comprising adding silica gel granules or silica gel granules and water-absorbing polymer particles to a forming raw material to prepare a clay, and forming the resulting ceramic clay into a formed product using a continuous forming machine.

21. (Canceled)